Reports of excavations by ASI

648. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ASI has come in for a severe criticism from the Parliamentary Standing Committee for its lethargy in not writing reports of the excavations it has undertaken, thus wasting public funds;

(b) whether it is a fact that the previous panel, too, had pointed out this lapse and in spite of it, his Ministry had done nothing to document the excavations;

(c) whether it is a fact that the post of the Director of National Archives has been filled up temporarily; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to write timely reports of the excavations?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Though detailed reports in respect of all excavations of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have not been published, brief reports in respect of all excavation have been submitted by the Archaeologists who conducted the excavations. These are published in the annual publication of the Archaeological Survey of India namely "Indian Archaeology—A Review" which is a source of valuable information for archaeological study and research. Besides many of these excavations have unearthed valuable antiquities and hitherto unknown aspects of old settlements and ancient civilizations.

(c) At present, there is no post of Director in the National Archives of India. However the post of Director General of Archives stands advertised by the UPSC to fill it up on regular basis, and for the time being it is held by the Joint Secretary of Ministry of Culture.

(d) The Archaeological Survey of India has decided not to grant

excavation license to those who have not submitted detailed report on their previous excavations. The Archaeological Survey of India has also drawn up a time bound programme to complete the pending excavation reports.

Khajuraho temples

649. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that conservation has taken a back seat at 1000 years old Chandela temples at Khujuraho;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is substantial seepage in main temples, plants are sprouting amid sculputures and the city of Khajuraho provides not even a public toilet for the tourist; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to restore this historic monument?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Centrally protected monuments at Khajuraho are receiving adequate and proper attention. Special reports to monuments have been undertaken wherever necessary, apart from day to day maintenance under the annual repair programme. The annual conservation programme and special repairs take care of the various maintenance issues like water seepage, growth of vegetation, etc.

As part of tourist amenities, two toilets have been provided near the western group of monuments. For the current financial year i.e. 2005-06 Rs. 38.30 lakhs budget is provided for conservation, to refurbish tourist amenities and environmental development of Khajuraho group of monuments. It is also appropriate to mention that instructions have been recently issued to all circles to pay special attention to improve tourist amenities in all World Heritage sites and ticketed monuments.